

Child Protection, Care and Support At Waimataitai

Recruitment and employment –see Employment procedures – Children Worker Safety Checking

Child Safe Practice Guidelines –supervision and access to children

Staff

To avoid situations where staff may be alone with children, all staff should examine the opportunities or possible situations where staff may be alone with children. Wherever possible an open door policy for all spaces should be used (excludes toilets). Staff should be aware of where all children are at all times.

If activities require one to one physical contact (i.e., classes in swimming, gymnastics etc.) parents and caregivers should be advised.

Where a child or young person requires assistance, e.g., if they are intellectually or physically disabled, if possible involve the parents/caregivers and outside agencies (in education such as the Ministry of Education's Special Education group) to assist. If this assistance is not available, ensure that the staff members are aware of the appropriate procedures when giving assistance.

Staff should avoid being alone when transporting a child or young person, unless an emergency requires it. Except in an emergency, children and young people are not to be taken from our organisation's premises, or from the programme we provide, without written parental consent (or the Principal's express permission.)

No students will be left without supervision after school events outside normal school programmes. A staff member will ensure all children are collected or returned to their parents or caregivers or make contact with a senior staff member should there be concerns.

Non-staff

Visitors should be monitored at all times by staff and volunteers and outside instructors should be monitored by staff. They will sign in and out of the school.

Volunteers in the school will all be made known to the principal, their purpose and involvement.

The principal retains the right to veto any parent/adult in a school activity should they feel this may be inappropriate and in the interests of children safety.

Non- custodial parents – do not use the school as a means for access. This will be explained to them by the principal.

All protection orders will be enforced by the school and where necessary police involved. Staff will take all reasonable steps to avoid any confrontations regarding this.

Page 43 – Safer Organisations Safer Children – Children's action plan

Dealing with suspected child abuse and neglect – see procedures

Identifying, Supporting and Protecting Vulnerable Children

Waimataitai School is committed to supporting all children, it recognises that some children are vulnerable. They can be vulnerable for a variety of reasons;

- home circumstances, poverty, domestic pressure and strain, reconstituted families,
- Attendance and late arrival- lack of support from the home
- Children who have minimal routines and consistency in their home lives
- transient home situations
- grief and loss, death and breakups
- anxiety and worries
- lack of supervision
- Parental pressure to perform
- Students with Special needs
- Students with parent with intellectual impairments
- Lack of awareness of own safety
- Medical events e.g, depression
- Physical disability e.g broken leg
- Not achieving and being aware and worrying about this
- Highly sensitive children
- Anxious children
- Children who have suffered abuse
- Students on ASD spectrum
- Disorders which cause challenges and issues.. ADHD, ODD, cerebral palsy
- Children with attachment issues, disorganised, reactive
- Anxiety around relationships at school Issues with friendships/bullying
- Anxiety around school work being too hard
- Lack of food, warm clothing, warmth at home, lack of uniform items
- Change of routines/ expectations – relievers

All children are potentially vulnerable, we need to be aware of their vulnerabilities and support and care for them.

We have systems in place to ensure communication between all people working with students at Waimataitai School. All Staff are instructed to “speak to someone” else when they have any concerns. Parents are encouraged to notify the school of any changes in circumstances or concerns.

Leaders have open door policies and are available to staff member, to listen to worries that have been shared which raise concern.

All team agendas have a time set to discuss any concerns we may have about students.

We also provide a support worker to provide support for children or parents who is a trained counsellor.

WAIMATAITAI SCHOOL

Procedures for DEALING WITH SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

(Part of Child Safety Practices – in line with Vulnerable Children’s act 2014)

RATIONALE:

The care, protection and safety of the child is paramount.

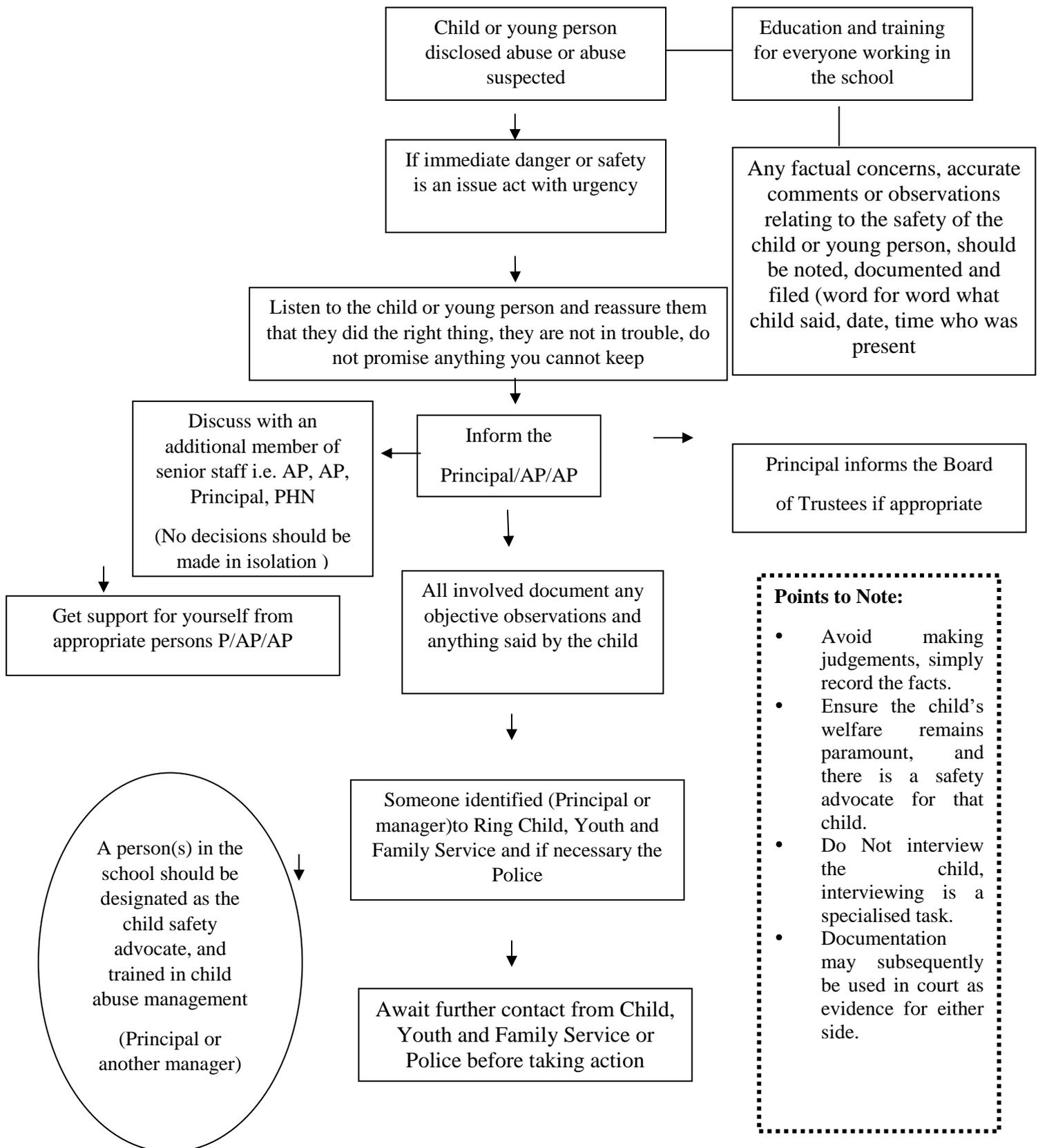
At Waimataitai we are committed to protecting and improving, the wellbeing of children

Child abuse or neglect may be encountered when a child discloses abuse to a friend or a staff member, or may be suspected through signs of injury, neglect, ill-treatment, emotional maltreatment, sexual abuse or inexplicable changes in a child’s general attitude and behaviour. This policy is to promote a safe environment for both students and staff.

PURPOSE:

- To ensure that the safety of the child or young person is the first consideration.
- To ensure that all disclosures and complaints are taken seriously and dealt with effectively.
- To provide clear guidance for management and staff in the actions to be taken in respect to any disclosures or allegations received concerning children or young persons within the school environment.
- It is to provide appropriate, adequate support for and supervision of children and staff affected by child abuse and neglect.
- It is also to offer guidelines for staff, in terms of reference and training, in the identification of incidences of child abuse and neglect.
- To ensure that in the case of a complaint against an employee, that due regard is given to the applicable employment agreement and the principles of natural justice are applied.

FLOWCHART OF ACTION



PROCEDURES

An environment will be provided which encourages and supports staff to respect, be aware of, receptive and sensitive to students discussing issues with them.

Staff member upon receipt of disclosure or suspicion of abuse;

Suspicion

- If a staff member suspects abuse is occurring but does not have evidence substantiated beyond reasonable doubt, the matter should be discussed confidentially with the principal or another member of the Management team before any action is taken.
- A confidential case history based on observations and conversations with the child should be compiled until it becomes apparent that further action is required or it is established there is no cause for concern.
- If the child or young person is in danger or in an unsafe situation, act to secure their immediate safety.

Disclosure

- If the child or young person is in danger or in an unsafe situation, act to secure their immediate safety.
- Listen to the child or young person and reassure them but do not make promises or commitments you can not keep i.e. promising not to tell anyone. You may need to tell them that you need help with this and that you will need to tell the principal or AP, do not speculate with the child what might happen now. The school does not interview the child this is the responsibility of trained professionals.
- Ensure that the child or young person has an advocate (likely to be Principal or AP) for them, supporting them through this process and that the support role is clearly defined. This may include support through the interviewing process at school. No child is interviewed by anyone without a member of the senior management present. Unless specifically advised by principal in the case of counsel for child.
- Inform the Principal/AP
- Document what the child or young person says, as well as anything said by the staff member.
- Do not interview the child. Obtain only necessary facts, if and when clarification is needed, i.e. is the child safe to go home?
- Refer to Child, Youth and Family Service or the Police. Any person may report to these agencies. Await further contact from them before taking action.
- If you are concerned for the child's wellbeing and safety while awaiting a response from the Child Youth and Family Service – keep the Principal, AP informed
- Do not inform the caregivers of action taken. This is the responsibility of the statutory agency.
- Get support for yourself, the Principal AP can arrange this for you. This can be a sensitive situation, it can be very stressful.
- Strict confidentiality must be preserved and the names of all involved must be disclosed only to those who need to know at the time.
- You cannot be held liable or accountable when acting in the interests of the child's safety or wellbeing.

- Training and education around processes and indicators of abuse should be available to all employees of the school.
- The school senior management team should have an awareness of child and family support agencies within the community.
- Ongoing awareness and prevention education programmes will be a part of school Health programmes to give awareness of options.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST EMPLOYEES

These procedures should be followed in the event of a disclosure of abuse or suspicion of abuse by an employee as per the Complaints policy:

- In line with the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014 all staff and regularly employed contractors who work onsite in school hours will be police vetted in order to eliminate the possibility of putting pupils at risk, and as a best practice tool for the school. The child or young person will be adequately protected. The child or young person's safety is the first consideration and must be upheld.
- Like all allegations of suspected abuse these will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Please note there are two procedures to be followed here:
 1. The reporting procedure in respect of the child/young person;
 2. The procedure for dealing with the staff member.

In all cases it is suggested that no one person should have responsibility for dealing with both the reporting issues and the employment issues.

- Advocacy for both parties should be sought, and documentation of all events held and steps recorded.
- In the event of allegations of abuse, employee should be advised to seek support/advice from:
 - NZEI, counsellor or field officer
 - the Principal, Associate Principal
 - a Human Rights Commission Officer

The decision to lay a complaint against an employee of the school should be made in consultation with the following:

- NZCYFS
- Police
- Chairperson of Board of Trustees

In the event of receiving a complaint the Principal should follow this policy regarding reporting of child abuse and neglect

- Inform the Chairperson of the School Board of Trustees as soon as possible.
- The Principal will keep records of any complaint or allegation and recommended follow-up action.
- If it is decided that further action should be taken, the alleged abuser will be informed formally of the complaint and their rights made clear in order that the employee can seek representation should he/she so wish.

- The person accused of the abuse will be informed of the complaint and a response sought inline with school complaints policy.
- The Principal and/or the Chair of the Board of Trustees will have a dual responsibility in respect of both the child or young person and the staff member involved. They will seek an immediate interview with agencies involved in the allegation and in the case of the Police with the officer in charge of the investigation and/or his or her supervisor. The purpose of this interview is to enable the Principal and the Board Chair to discuss the investigation of the allegation, determine what, if any, assistance they can give to the investigation.
- Once a Police investigation has begun, the Board of Trustees, as the employer, should give immediate consideration to suspending the employee on full pay.
- Under no circumstances will the employee involved in any such allegation and the child or young person making the allegation remain in the same school environment.
- Procedures should be followed in line with those set out in any collective employment agreement or individual employment agreement dealing with this issue.
- No action taken by the school should undermine or frustrate any investigation being conducted by an external agency. Where doubt exists the appropriate agency should be contacted.

CONCLUSIONS

- Parents and staff will be aware of the procedures the school will take to protect children and young people from any kind of abuse through school newsletter.
- A commitment is made to ensure that children and young people are provided with preventative education to enhance their safety and well being.
- Any report of suspected abuse is protected from any criminal, civil or disciplinary action by Section 16, Children, Young Persons and their Families Act, 1989.
- The first concern of the school will be to create an environment where children's needs are met, and to refer to those statutory agencies charged with investigating concerns so that children may be protected. It is then the school's charge to act as a support to that child in the process that may follow.

References:

Safer Organisations safer children, Guidelines for Child Protection Policy to build safer organisations – Children's Action Plan – Feb 2015

Let's Stop Child Abuse Together – An interagency Guide to breaking the cycle – – The Department of Child, Youth and Family Service

"Breaking the Cycle – An Interagency Guide to Child Abuse" – The Department of Child, Youth and Family Service

NZEI Service and Support Manual - Code of Conduct, Physical Contact with Students
"Keeping Ourselves Safe" – Resource Kit.

Definitions of Abuse

- a. **Sexual Abuse** – is any act or acts that involve forcing or enticing a child into sexual activities or result in the sexual exploitation of a child or young person, whether consensual or not. It may include, but is not restricted to:
non-contact abuse, exhibitionism, voyeurism, suggestive behaviour or comments, exposure to pornographic material, contact abuse (see page 8-9 Let's Stop Child Abuse Together)
- b. **Physical Abuse** – is any act to acts that may result in inflicted injury to a child or young person. It may include but is not restricted to:
- bruises and welts, cuts and abrasions, fractures and sprains, abdominal injuries, head injuries, injuries to internal organs, strangulation and suffocation, positioning, burns and scolds.

Such injury or injuries may be deliberately inflicted or the unintentional result of rage. Regardless of motivation, the result for the child is physical abuse.

- c. **Neglect** – is persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, or any act or omission that results in impaired physical or emotional functioning, injury, and/or development of a child or a young person. It may include, but is not restricted to;
- physical neglect, failure to provide the necessities to sustain life or health of the child or young person
 - neglectful supervision – failure to provide developmentally appropriate and/or legally required supervision of the child or young person, leading to an increased risk of harm
 - medical neglect failure to seek, obtain or follow through with medical care for the child or young person resulting in their impaired functioning and/or development
 - abandonment – leaving a child or young person in any situation without arranging necessary care for them and with no intention of returning
 - refusal to assume parental responsibility – unwillingness or inability to provide to provide appropriate care or control for a child
- d. **Emotional/psychological abuse** – is any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and/or emotional functioning and developmental of a child or young person. It may include, but is not restricted to:
- rejection, isolation or oppression
 - deprivation of affection or cognitive stimulation
 - inappropriate and continued criticism, threats, humiliation, accusations, expectations of, or towards, the child or young person
 - exposure to family violence
 - corruption of the child or young through exposure to, or involvement in, illegal or anti-social activities
 - the negative impact of the mental or emotional condition of the parent or caregiver
 - the negative impact of substance abuse by anyone living in the same residence as the child or young person

Possible signs and symptoms of child abuse

Physical abuse and neglect

Unexplained bruises, welts, burns, fractures, abrasions
Behavioural concerns
Developmental delays
Child talking about things that concerning
Neglectful supervision
Abandonment
Medical neglect
Physical neglect
Undue hostility to authority
Excessive disruptiveness and aggressiveness
Violence towards peers
Destruction of school property, stealing
Wearing inappropriate clothing (e.g. long sleeves in hot weather)
Frequent absences without reasonable explanation
“Frozen watchfulness” – fear of sudden movement
Apparently very high pain threshold

Sexual and emotional Abuse

Extreme passivity and withdrawal from peers
Being a stoical isolate
Wanting to be perfect in all work and behaviour
Every low self esteem crying a lot without apparent reason]
Frequent headaches and /stomach aches
Exposure to pornography/unusual sexual knowledge
Masturbation
Not wanting to go home/running away
Not wanting to take part in physical education
Lacking in trust towards adults/resistance to being touched
Showing marked changes in interest and aptitude for school work

Some signs and symptoms of parents who might abuse

Do not seek medical help for a child who clearly needs it
Indicate their child is ‘bad’ or different from other children
Present contradictory history for injuries
Are unwilling to discuss their child’s problems with school work
Are reluctant to give information about their child
Have unrealistic expectations for their child
Are clearly under financial and/or personal stress
Indicate they were abused themselves as children
Live in a very isolated and withdrawn way with few social contacts

3.12 WAIMATAITAI SCHOOL

Safety Checking Guidelines ref. Vulnerable children's act 2014

Rationale:

It is now mandatory under law to safety check all children's workers for all non-teaching employees and contractors who regularly work in the school during school hours. The process for safety checking needs to be clear and transparent with the contents remaining strictly confidential.

Purpose:

1. To identify the person/s who will action safety checks.
2. To outline how confidentiality will be observed
3. To outline steps that will be taken to ensure that the person being safety checked has been given reasonable opportunity to validate the information.

Guidelines:

1. All non-teaching staff and regular contractors will be informed of the requirement for **safety checks before confirmation of employment.** (
2. The safety checks will be received by the principal, a **record kept and dated**, of the check being undertaken on the employees confidential file as per school policy.
3. **Where a safety check raises a concern** the following needs to be taken into consideration;
The Board or any agent of the board may not take adverse action in relation to a person who is subject of a safety check until;
 - a) the person has validated the information contained in the event; or
 - b) the person has been given reasonable opportunity to validate the information, but has failed to do so within a reasonable period.

All information received must be verified as true and correct. The result of a safety check may raise employment issues and it is up to the board personnel subcommittee (principal and personnel convenor) as an employer to decide if the information gained indicates that they must act. Outside confidential advice should be sought. Care must be taken that a fair process is followed if a board or sub-committee of the board is considering any action. **Confidentiality is essential throughout this process until an outcome is reached.**

Procedures to be followed;

- Principal upon receipt of a safety check which raises concern will contact the personnel convener for the board
- Consideration will be given to whether the contents of the safety check should affect employment or access to the school. Every situation is different and **confidential outside advice** should be sought.
- Consideration should be given to;
 - Whether a police vet indicates police have concerns about the person working with children.
 - Whether a concern raised indicates there are concerns about the person working with children.
 - How serious was the offence/ concern raised?

- How long ago was the offending/ concern raised?
- What was the outcome?
- Was it a one-off offence or is there a pattern of concern?
- What is the employee's/contractor's role in the school? How does the type of offence/concern relate to it?

A record of the safety check/vet having taken place must be kept. Any minutes taken with

regards to matters that arose from this should be kept and are confidential and to be dealt with

in-committee.

4. The board has to determine the amount of risk that it wishes to accept or level of behaviour it deems appropriate.
5. As safety check is now a legislative requirement If an existing **employee/contractor refuses to consent** to a safety check they are refusing to obey a lawful instruction, this may result in disciplinary action or negate any contract. Advice should be sought when this occurs.

If an **applicant refuses to consent** to a safety check then their application cannot proceed.

Conclusion:

The Board thought the principal must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the staff employed or working within their school on a regular basis are appropriate to work with and alongside children.